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# THE RIDE <sup>T</sup>/<sub>O</sub> KHIVA.

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From "Punch."

By F. C. BURNAND,

AUTHOR OF "HAPPY THOUGHTS," "MORE HAPPY THOUGHTS,"  
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LONDON :  
BRADBURY, AGNEW, & CO.,  
8, 9, 10, BOUVERIE STREET.

1877.

251. h. 21. Digitized by Google

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**BRADBURY, AGNEW, & CO., PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.**

## PREFACE.

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### *AN APPEAL TO THE PUBLIC.*

WHICH Public? The British Public.

The Title explains itself. I should not have called this work The Ride to Khiva—if it was anything but The Ride to Khiva. I said I *would* ride *to, and from*, Khiva. I am a man of my word. And *my word is as good as my bond*.

During my absence, the Editor of the Periodical in which these pages from time to time appeared, was the victim of an extraordinary fraud.



I forwarded all my notes by a Private Wire—an invention of my own.

A certain unprincipled scoundrel who deserted from his first regiment in the Crimea, and who has since been in almost every branch of the service at home and abroad, conceived the idea of representing himself as "Private Wire" *unattached* (my Private Wire was *attached*, and hence the very natural mistake on the part of the Editor at home), and received payment for carrying my messages—which had been communicated direct to my friend and agent, the Livery Stable Keeper, from whom I had hired my first horse for my ride to Khiva,—to the office of the Periodical in question.

Thus, through the credulity of my agent,

and the too confiding spirit of the Editor, I was placed in most embarrassing pecuniary circumstances ; and hunting men will scarcely believe that *I rode to Khiva without a check* !—yet such is the fact.

On my return, I immediately waited on the Editor, who, having unwittingly aspersed my character in his footnotes, most handsomely offered me all the reparation in his power. The affair has been pleasantly arranged, but in republishing the entire narrative I have purposely retained the Editor's Notes just as they appeared from time to time, together with his ample and handsome retraction at the conclusion of the work.

All I have to add is, that if at any time the Government should require, for a Secret

Indo-Russian Mission, a faithful and devoted servant *who has no objection to travel, no delicacy as to wearing disguise*, who, generally speaking, *knows his way about everywhere*, and who has an intimate knowledge of all the ropes, whether slack or tight,—then, a man with all these qualities, and more, combined, will be found in The Riding Representative,—that is, in

Yours truly,

THE AUTHOR OF THE RIDE TO KHIVA.

*Appendix.*—On inquiry, I find that Captain F. Burnaby did not go over precisely the same ground as myself. The present Rider may be congratulated on having discovered the shortest and the cheapest route. (*Vide Map.*)

# CONTENTS.

---

## CHAPTER I.

"A HORSE! A Horse!"—"My Kingdom for a Horse!" . . . 1

## CHAPTER II.

"Why Not a Bicycle?"—The Diary Commences—The Frozen Sound—Pig and Wickski—Alarming Reports . . . 6

## CHAPTER III.

Chaffinski—With the Vodki—A Case for Parliament—The Happy Family . . . . . 16

## CHAPTER IV.

A Night Surprise—An Inspiration—Artistic Jealousy—Discovering a Native—Cheating Never Prospers—Useful Information—Map . . . . . 25

## CHAPTER V.

Band of Russian Spies—Pig-culiar People—"Sleep, Gentle Sleep!"—Wolves!! . . . . . 40

## CHAPTER VI.

- Provisions for Journey—A Trying Time—Intensity Intensified—  
History Repeats Itself . . . . . 48

## CHAPTER VII.

- Private Wire at Work—A Terrific Sacrifice—The Beginning of  
the End . . . . . 57

## CHAPTER VIII.

- Perplexing Information—A Cure, A Cure—Medical Attend-  
ance—Base Ingratitude—Meditating an Atrocity—The  
Gaoler's Daughter—A Cell . . . . . 64

## CHAPTER IX.

- A Sad Prospect—The Governor is Resolved—A Light in Her  
Laughing Eye—Who Pays, Breaks—"We Fly by Night"  
—The Captive Free . . . . . 78

## CHAPTER X.

- The Pig was Beat—Love for a Week, a Day—Lovers' Quarrels  
—A Romantic Nature—A Hasty Answer . . . . . 90

## CHAPTER XI.

- A Confession of Guilt—The Girl I Leave Behind Me—Alone  
I Do It—The Baconian Philosophy—Coming Back—The  
Vow Accomplished—Editor's Appendix . . . . . 100

# THE *RIDE TO KHIVA.*

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## CHAPTER I.

*He informs the Editor of his preparations. The Editor begs to inform the public that he (the Ed.) is not responsible for the scheme, and withholds his assent for the present.*

SIR,—In a brief letter, two weeks since, I announced to you my intention of riding to Khiva. I knew that there was a large body among the public willing to pay my expenses, by subscription, to go away anywhere, and so —why not to Khiva?

Now, Sir, I am perfectly aware, that Captain Fred Burnaby has made this ground, as it were, his own. And how? Because, for-

sooth, having ridden to Khiva, he published a large book about it. A gallant exploit it was I admit, though I should be diffident in making the admission (however admission is free in this instance), *as I myself rode to Khiva years ago ; thought nothing of it, and said nothing about it.* I took it in the day's work, and there an end.

But *now* the case is different. I must out-BURNABY BURNABY. He only rode *to* Khiva. *I shall ride there and back.* I shall keep you informed of my progress from time to time, either by special messenger, or by private wire, which, with my own patented apparatus, I shall take with me in my side pocket. It occupies no space to speak of, and is paid-out (of my own pocket), like the Atlantic Cable. I am getting up a Company for it, and all shareholders, among whom I hope to number most of the Crowned Heads of Europe, will be presented with a beautiful engraved portrait of myself as the Russian Courier, dressed in *kremlin* (a pecu-

liar sort of warm waterproof coat) and *kopeck* (a headdress worn at night when travelling through the snow, and tied under the chin with a small *mijouk*—a kind of leather thong with a silver clasp). Before starting for a ride to anywhere, whether Khiva or Kidderminster, one thing is absolutely necessary, *i.e.*, *something to ride on.*

Economy being the better part of valour, I have determined, in view of the subscription list not being quite so full as I might naturally expect (it is not yet completed—and you haven't, I regret to see, exhibited it in your window in Fleet Street—why this delay?), not to purchase, but to hire. I forget the exact distance from here to Khiva. But one can't hurt much at eighteenpence an hour (half-a-crown for the first and eighteenpence for all the others—of course I keep all the others and let some one else have the first), and a reduction will be made on taking a quantity.



I am off now to see about the horse. After that I must call in at May's, the costumier's, about my dresses. The *Courrier* of St. Petersburg used to have at least six, one after the other, appearing in the third as *Mr. Pickwick* (spelt *Kjǵkǵp* in Russian, which is spoken, as read, backwards, and takes some time to master), and finally as *Apollo*; but this last is for a different climate.

I have got my saddlebags containing provisions, warming-pan (an article absolutely indispensable in the cold climate to which I am going), matches, saucepans, patent smokeless stoves, coals, and (by the kind permission of the Renters of Drury Lane Theatre) the red-hot poker out of the last Christmas Pantomime.

A semi-grand piano, fitted up inside as a comfortable bed-room, all complete, a store of American beef, a cellaret of beer, champagne (*Pommery* and *Greno très sec*, because it keeps *dry* in all climates), and a few other

articles, the list of which would make *this* article unnecessarily lengthy, complete my Christopher—I mean my kit.

Directly the last subscription is paid in to my account, or a sufficiently good promise to that effect be deposited with my banker in writing, *then*, but not till then, I am off; till which happy moment, believe me to remain here, pluckily and dashingly as ever,

YOUR RIDING REPRESENTATIVE.

P.S. I re-open this to say that I think I've just met with the animal to suit me. A quiet, steady, handsome cob, fourteen-and-a-half by ten, warranted sound, at one-and-sixpence an hour, or to be sold, by the pound, or square inch. I'm to try him in Rotten Row to-morrow. Look out!

## CHAPTER II.

*Note by the Editor to the Public.*—Our Equestrian Representative professes to send us telegrams daily by the private cable with which he has furnished himself. These messages are not transmitted to us direct, but through a friend of his, who can interpret the cipher. We do not, for one moment, throw a doubt on Our Representative's integrity, but we cannot forget that one of Our Representatives did *not* go to India, though he pretended to accompany H.R.H. the Prince of Wales on his tour, and therefore as "once bitten, twice shy," we must make assurance doubly sure (though nothing can double or equal Our Representative's assurance, if he is *not* at this moment riding to Khiva) before we

offer ourselves as guarantees to the Public for his good faith. We publish his last letter before starting, which we consider as an important item in the case.

DEAR SIR,

The horse suited me to a T. He has been packed up, so much paid on account, and he is now off for Dover. Of course I shall not ride him this side of the Channel. My equestrian career will begin between Paris and St. Petersburg. At one time I had got a great mind (I always have a great mind, so that's nothing new) to ride to Khiva on a bicycle. But for political reasons, which you will appreciate, I have given up the idea. I was afraid that some confusion would arise in the Mahomedan or Russian mind between Bicycle and Protocol; and any complication at this moment should be, particularly, avoided.

I enclose the list of subscriptions for my Journey to Khiva. They look very well:—

	£	s.	d.
One who Knows You . . . . .	0	10	0
One who doesn't Know you, and doesn't Want to . . . . .	0	5	0
A Friend who would see you further first .	1	0	0
A Few of the Inmates at Colney Hatch ( <i>per</i> the Milkman) . . . . .	0	3	1½
A Constant Reader, who is most anxious that you should go to Khiva, and stop there. . . . .	10	0	0
A Real Lady . . . . .	0	0	3
A Resident at Jericho . . . . .	0	1	1
Three Stamp Collectors at Bath . . . .	0	0	4½
One who wishes you may get it . . . .	1000	0	0
A Believer . . . . .	0	2	0
A Weary Admirer . . . . .	0	12	6
A. S. S. . . . .	20	0	0
One who has met you once, and is glad to hear of your going away for a consider- able time. (N.B.—This donation is on condition of your being away for six months. It will be continued yearly, if you never return to England) . . . .	50	0	0
A Job-master (who will willingly supply the horse for riding to Khiva, if paid in advance) . . . . .	0	2	6
One who never wants to see you again . .	100	0	0
Central Pressure Association . . . . .	0	1	6
A True Friend (on condition of your going to Khiva, and not writing anything at all for the next ten years) . . . .	500	0	0

And numerous others, with or without conditions. However, on the strength of a certain amount down, and promises, I have started—or, I should say, before you receive this, I shall have started; for

I'm off to Khiva early in the morning,  
I'm off to Khiva afore de broke o' day !  
I'll fill my bag with lots of little yellow boys,  
I'm off to Khiva afore de broke o' day !

And so farewell for the present. You'll have a telegram from me in less than no time. Terms for telegrams will vary according to the length of the message, the value of the communication, and the distance to be travelled by the electric spark. But don't be alarmed, you are safe in the hands of

YOUR RIDING REPRESENTATIVE.

Here follows the

### DIARY.

*(On the road to Khiva.)*

*Tuesday.*—Left St. Peterburg early. I pass

over my ride from Paris to St. Petersburg, as nothing happened of any consequence. I was belated for one night, and ran short of provisions; but—you know what a good Legerdemainist I am,—well, I made an omelette in my hat, drank a glass of Pommard (this sounds like something for the hair, but it isn't, when properly pronounced) from the inexhaustible bottle (both tricks are worth a traveller's while, or *wile*, to learn—and for a soldier the cannon-ball in the hat is most useful,—of course I have the whole bag of tricks with me), made an orange tree grow, took an orange for dessert, and went to sleep. Next afternoon I was ready—aye ready. Rode for fifty miles. 7.30 A.M.—Came on a dead Flat. No name or address. Wondered who he was. Telegraphed to Necropolis Company to say there was a job on hand, *would they undertake it?*

8.50.—Very cold. Saw a Frozen Sound. This will give you some idea of what Negretti and Zambra might mean when they say,

"How cold it has been to day!" Always thought (till I knew they sold barometers) that Negretti and Zambra were clog-dancers, or nigger duettists, at a Music Hall, with a breakdown. Wonderful sight a Frozen Sound. Perhaps it was the last sound uttered by the dead Flat. I put it into my *cornet-à-piston*, and blew it to warm it. "No effects," as they say at my Bank. My driver, who accompanies me on a sleigh (this isn't a musical instrument, so you mustn't be misled when I say he "accompanies me on it"), observed that "he thought it was an echo from the hills, which had lost its way, and been frozen to death."

12 *mid-day*.—Stopped to *lunchski*, as we call it in this country. The Driver eats tallow candles, wheel grease, and drinks *wickski*—a Russian spirit distilled from raw candle-ends. A Russian never takes a bath, he always goes in for a *dip*.

2 P.M.—Between *Drjnkomaviski* and *Bak-kakhan*. Lost our way in the snow, and



dined with a farmer. He said he thought there wouldn't be any war. At least he hadn't heard anything about it. After dinner, I slept in a pigstye, and resumed my journey at 4 A.M. Took with me a little pig. Poor little chap, he squealed very much, and nearly woke the farmer, who would have been grieved to part with him. So I put a gag in its mouth, and thus avoided what might have been a painful scene. Removed gag when at a distance of two miles from the farm. I shall educate this pig: as he has commenced by having a "gag" in his mouth, perhaps I had better bring him up for the stage. Put my horse tandem-fashion in the sleigh, so as to allow myself more leisure for teaching the pig.

11 A.M.—Pig already beginning to master his letters. I fancy some one has given him his rudiments before. There is a twinkle in his eye that I don't half like. One thing is comparatively reassuring, he does *not* show much aptitude for cards.

*Friday*.—Came to a sign-post. Examined it. Found I had been for two days riding towards Persia. Worked my compass, and took two turns to the right. After *lunchski*, had half a game at "Beggar my Neighbour" with the Pig, and rode on. Pig improving, but still stupid. He *will* cry whenever he sees the Ace of Spades, and I can't make out why. The sleigh-driver doesn't know.

6 P.M.—Cold and raw. So cold, and so raw, that I shall be very glad when it's hot and quite done. Arrived at a *shebeenski* rejoicing in the sign of *The Rose Bud*. Called for some of their best, and "nipped" it in the Bud. Gave Piggy a drop of strong *wickski*. It made his tail curl. Piggy vain of the effect, but evidently much pleased, and wanted to play me at *écarté*. Refused. But what I *will* do is to teach Piggy "All Fours." If he learns it, I can make a fortune, as no one knows the game out here. Sat up all night hard at work with Piggy. Driver asleep.

*Next Day.*—Met a Tartar Gentleman on the road. He asked us to share his dinner with him—*potksi-luckski*, as they call it here. We accepted; my sleigh-driver, myself, and the pig. The Tartar Gentleman got the worst of it at dinner, as we were three to one. After dinner played him at All Fours. The Tartar Gentleman won the first game, but we played three more. Cleared him out of his roubles, and rode on quickly in the direction of Khiva.

The Tartar Gentleman subsequently rode away to the nearest police station. In consequence of this, we had a difficulty later on at a Russian *Stashunouski*, but fortunately made friends with the *Inspektorski*, who was much amused with the Pig's tricks, also with my omelette in the hat, inexhaustible bottle, and little Joey (with mechanical head) in the bag. I gave him an invitation to call on me whenever he might be coming to town, and then rode on, *briskly*, as we say in Russia, in the direction of Khiva. Rub a Russian the right way,

and you won't catch a Tartar. Expect next telegram in a couple of days, as snow-storms have set in, and there's a talk of Wolves coming down and attacking Travellers. Now for real excitement!

I don't wish to throw any discredit on a gallant officer, *but* no one knows Captain Burnaby on the road that *I* am riding to Khiva. Odd. Just heard a Wolf in the distance. If one comes too near, I shall mention Mr. Gladstone's name to him, and see if *that* will frighten him. No signs of one at present. Great cry, but very little Wolf.

*Note (private to Editor).*—Please pay the livery-stable keeper, 2A, Green Street, Horsemonger Lane, for my last three weeks' hire. I told him you'd settle with him regularly, and I'll settle with you on my return. Mind, not more than eighteen pence an hour.

## CHAPTER III.

*(Forwarded to us through a Friend by Private Wire.)\**

*The day after the one last mentioned.*—Met sixteen wolves to-day all wrapped up in sheep's clothing to keep themselves warm. Tried Mr. Gladstone's name on them with excellent effect. Haven't seen them again. Pig getting very clever. Met a fair Circassian coming home. She was quite the Circassian *crème de la crème*. In fact, as I said to her, "You're so much the cream as to be quite the cheese!" She blushed and replied, "O son of thrice noble parents"—they are uncommonly polite these Circassians—"O well-

\* To prevent mistakes, we think it as well to state, that the "Private Wire" in question is *not* a soldier—at least we suppose not. We merely print the words as written at the head of the MS. left at our Office by one of Our Representative's many friends.—ED.

fed and much-caressed one"—she must have meant the Pig, not *me*—"O funny little fat father"—she must have been thinking of some one else when she said this—"I am afraid that your words are *chaffinski*"—(a Circassian expression for not meaning what you say)—but I assured her she was mistaken. "O beautiful one! O unhappy one!" I replied, my memory furnishing me with appropriate expressions from the translations of the Italian *libretti* to which we are accustomed at the Opera, "how strangely thou art mistaken! Ah Heaven! my divine enchantress (*divina incantatrice*), my words are the voice of truth!" Then I spread out the Alphabet before her, and the Pig grunted at each letter which made up her lover's name. She parted with two roubles, and left us, much pleased with the entertainment.

*Wednesday.*—Came up to Fort Number One. Found General Kauffmann here taking care

c

of Number One. Gave Kauffmann some lozenges for his voice. "*Kauff, man*, no more," said I, pleasantly, and he went into fits. Gave him a backhander with the *wickski* bottle to get him out of fits. Treatment successful. I asked him if we should be stopped before we got to Khiva. He answered with considerable caution, and put his finger to his nose. The last thing I saw of the old General was his left eye, as he winked at us through a loophole in Fort Number One. Thermometer going down to twenty degrees below nothing. Never was so cold. I have a warm sack with a hot-air apparatus in which I live the greater part of the day, and ride side-saddleways like a lady. As in this climate one dare not show one's eyes, or nose, or hands, I have ingeniously contrived holes through which the reins pass, and so I manage to guide my animal. If this cold increases, I must do in Russian Tartary as the Russian Tartars do, and, when riding,

get inside and pull the blinds down. But I'm a Cosmopolitan, and can live anywhere. I find the piano a great comfort. It affords considerable amusement by day, and forms an admirable sleeping place at night. This evening played two games of Double Dummy with the Pig. He won the last rubber. If he repeats this, I shall watch his play closely. The Sleigh-driver backed the Pig. I begin to suspect collusion. How will this end?

*Day after.*—Came across a *Vodki*, which is a sort of Russian Punch-show, only without Toby. It was being carried by its spirited proprietor, who complained bitterly of the decay of the drama. The *Vodki*-man admired the Pig, and made an offer. Refused it; but played the *Vodki*-man at *écarté*, with which he was not previously acquainted:—at least, so he *said*; but, for a novice, I never saw a man cut the king so often. Fortunately, as I explained to him after he had won a dozen



games, we were only playing for amusement—not for money—or I should have lost considerably. Row with the Vodki-man. Appeal to the Sleigh-driver. Sleigh-driver sided with Vodki. I offered him an I.O.U. They both said that in the middle of a snow desert this was of no use to *them*. Obligated to pay in roubles. Vodki-man wished me to bear no malice, and offered me a glass of native *wickski*. Not liking to offend him, took it.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Next Morning.*—Everything disappeared, and everybody—Vodki-man, Sleigh-driver, Piano, and Pig. All gone. I am alone in the Great Snow Desert—houseless, friendless, unprotected. Policeman only. makes his rounds here once in three months, and then finds it dull, as there are no area-railings, cooks, or cold mutton within fifty miles. Please send me a cheque at once (by Private

Wire\*), or I shall not be able to get on to Khiva—not even on foot.

You wouldn't like to hear of Your Representative perishing of cold and starvation in the Great Snow Desert. The British Government would take up the subject warmly; but the subject himself would be precious cold before the British Government stirred in the matter, and even then two or three years might elapse before an Honourable Member would call for the papers, relating to "the mysterious disappearance of a British subject somewhere in the snow between St. Petersburg and Khiva," to be laid before the House. Send the cheque *per* my friend, whom you can thoroughly trust, and who knows all about it. Do not delay. If you've any misgiving,† just look

\* We are struck by the mention of this name again in connection with sending a cheque. Can Private Wire be really a soldier, and not a telegraphic apparatus? We have told our Confidential Boy in the front office to make inquiries.

† We have. But still if Our Representative is really,

up the people whose names are down on my Subscription List, and who haven't paid up. If my hands are not too frozen to write or to wire, I will send you my diary as usual. But should the wolves get hungry \* \* \* \*

*Next Day (Diary continued by Private Wire).*  
—Luckiest chance in the world! Found a *mhoka* (a Tartar donkey) and a boy going to Khiva. Boy says he knows the way. No saddle or bridle. Only a *Jolee* (a small sum equal to about fourpence of our money) by the hour. Away! upon my bare-backed steed.

*Day after.*—Hooray! (*This again is by Private Wire.*) The Pig has come back safe and sound. He had a squeak for his life. The Vodki-man had religious objections to eating him, and the Pig fortunately getting

through no fault of his own, in such a pitiable condition, something ought to be done. To be on the safe side, we shall consult a solicitor. We have had no information as yet concerning this "Private Wire."—ED.

hold of the letters of the Alphabet (which he carries with him round his neck), spelt out the words, "I'm a Christian."

The Vodki-man instantly released him, as, being a Turk, and not a Tartar, he never tortures Christians. In fact they never do out here. That's all a mistake. The Pig is as happy as possible, and has already made great friends with the Donkey and the Boy.

1 P.M.—Luncheon time. At this point I came on Captain Burnaby's track.\* He has left his footprint in the snow. I telegraph

\* In warmly congratulating Captain Burnaby on his safe return from his recent tour in Asia Minor, we also congratulate *ourselves* on the opportunity now afforded us of testing the correctness—by which expression we show ourselves far from impugning the veracity—of Our Special Representative's statements. Besides, if Our Riding Representative has gone wrong, we are sure that the gallant officer above mentioned will be only too delighted to telegraph to him all such necessary directions as "Go-ahead!" "First turning to the right!" "Halt!" and so forth. . . . Since writing the above, a map of the country, drawn by our Representative, exhibiting its strong and weak points, and showing the route he is now

over this news at once, as I know the publishers are all rushing *en masse* to buy his works, and I want to know what they'll give for one of his foot-prints? The print is a proof—of his having been here; and *I'll swear to it*—for a consideration. My friend at the livery stables will receive tenders (he told me so when he helped me to dismount, after my first ride), and will forward them to yours truly by Private Wire. On we go again to Khiva.

taking, has been delivered by his agent, the Livery-stable keeper. We were out at the time, but our Confidential Boy in the front office took it in, and gave the man five shillings on account. It will be his own—the Confidential Boy's—account if the map is not both genuine and authentic. The boy quite forgot to ask about Private Wire, but he says that the man who generally brings the MS. has a "millinterry hair." Still—the boy is to blame.

*Latest Intelligence.*—Boy in tears. His mother has arrived. The five shillings belong to *her*. Further complications. Result in our next, as we *must* go out (by the back door) and call on Captain Burnaby. We are most anxious to see the horse that he has ridden so much on. It must be his hobby.—ED.

## CHAPTER IV.

*(Continued by Private Wire as before.)\**

*Next Day.*—Up all night with Pig, teaching him something new. Maskelyne and Cook would do good business out here with Psycho and a sleigh. Many a snow-farmer in these regions would be glad of Psycho for an evening's amusement, and would pay high for the entertainment. Piggy nearly as good as Psycho, *only not so dependable*. The advantage of my Pig over Psycho is that *no machinery is required*. This is a hint to Messrs. M. and C. But I won't say another word if— Need I add a condition to men of

\* We hope soon to be able to say something definite about this "Private Wire;" the question being, is he a soldier or a telegraphic communicator? We have our doubts—but who hasn't?—ED.

such business-like habits as Messrs. M. and C. *If I know the secret of Psycho, what am I worth?* I am sure that my friends, M. and C., at a distance, will, after this intimation, at once add their honoured and valuable names to the list of subscribers by whose assistance I am to be kept out here. When I return, I shall, with my Pig, my Horse, my merry Tartar Boy, my Mechanical Piano, and perhaps a Fair Circassian or two (something like the Lady with long hair on Mrs. Allen's wall advertisement—only much more so), have such a Show for the Egyptian Hall as will astonish all London. My Entertainment will be announced as “My Ride to Khiva, Illustrated with a Pig! a Piano!! a Panorama!!!” *Note.*—Crossed a river to-day. The Oxus, I believe.

*Same Afternoon.*—The Donkey is an ass. He won't stir a step. Fortunately, my Horse has thrown the Vodki-man who returned him to-day with a note, saying that, as he couldn't

ride, and as he should probably be sued by me for eighteenpence an hour (as he infallibly would have been for my own sake, and that of my friend the Livery-stable keeper in town), he thought he had better return him with *thankski* (*i.e.* Tartar expression of gratitude). The Horse will be of the greatest use to me. *Note.*—Crossed another river, or the same. The Oxus, I fancy.

*Same Night.*—I am in luck! A discovery! I had just finished practising the Pig at *écarté* (he won four games out of five to-night, so I shall begin to teach him something else, because my Sleigh-driver and his Boy always back the Pig now, and I lost more than a rouble and a half—odd!), when, accidentally, I whistled the favourite movement from the Overture to the *Cheval de Bronze*. In a second, my steed had broken from its moorings, and was cantering round and round *in exact time to the tune*. Struck with the coincidence, I put on the steam, and went *presto*—



so did the animal,—*prestissimo*—so did the animal ; while the Pig sat up on his tail, which doubled under him, and grinned from ear to ear (just as you've seen the mouth of the boar's head at Christmas time with an apple, or a lemon, in it), and the Sleigh-driver and Boy applauded violently. *Prestissimo-issimo*—"again he urges on his wild career ;" and as I repeated this most happily applicable line to myself, a thought—a happy thought—if I may be permitted to use the expression—struck me. "Am I not in the very region of the Scenes of the Circle? Am I not in the country of *Mazeppa*?" Then the idea formulated itself into poetry, and, like an inspired *Vates* of old, I exclaimed—

"'Tis the spot for bold *Mazeppa*,  
There the Steppes, and here the Stepper !"

And then I stopped ; inspiration had reached its limits, and why should I force inspiration by suggesting to inspiration that the next

line ought to end with "Pepper," and that "Leper" wouldn't be a bad termination for line four? Ah! if poets only knew when to halt, how many halting lines should we be annually spared! Why pump at a dry well? Why bring up the muddy water? Why not, in fact, leave the Pierian well alone? "O Inspiration!" as the Poet has feelingly sung—"O Inspiration! what crimes have not been committed in thy name!" But to go into the subject of what crimes have *not* been committed, would be to wander away from my present fixed intention, which is to write a Diary of my Ride to Khiva, and not a disquisition on Inspiration, the Divine Afflatus, and burning the bellows.

*Next Day.*—Crossed the Oxus again. Slept well. Up early. Horse out. Whistled Overture, and then tried fresh music on Mechanical Piano, while the Pig turned the handle. Another of his increasingly numerous accom-

plishments. Horse up to a great deal more than was ever suspected in the philosophy of my noble friend the Livery-stable keeper, or I shouldn't have got him for one-and-sixpence an hour. I find that he (the Horse) has been accustomed to sup with the Clown; that he can fire off a pistol; that he can dance a waltz, a polka, and march in quick or slow time. I aimed at him with my umbrella (or somebody's which came with me from England), and he fell down, pretending (with much spontaneous humour) to be dead. We try to lift him. "No good pulling at a dead horse," I exclaimed (this will be part of my dialogue for my Entertainment—registered already), and then, after asking him to get up to see his mother, then to have his dinner, and other facetious suggestions, I cried out, "Here's a Policeman coming!" whereupon he jumped up on to his all-fours, pulled himself together, the Pig turned the handle of the Mechanical Piano, which at once struck

up the *Bronze Horse*, *prestissimo et fortissimo*, and away went the gallant steed round and round, with me clicking the whip, and crying out "Hi! hi! Hoopla! tchk!" while the Sleigh-driver and the Boy applauded to the echo. Fortune is before us.

*Midday*.—Pig sulky, in consequence of Horse's success. What jealousy there always is among *artistes*! Now the difficulties of an *entrepreneur* commence. I wish we could get to Khiva. *Note*.—River again. Crossed the Oxus for the fourth time. How it meanders. Good name for a Tartar love-story, *Hero and Meander*—of course all about *me-and-her* (*jeu-de mot* registered).

2.30.—Met a sign-post going the other way. We've taken the wrong road again. Getting nearer China; most provoking. Where are we now? The Pig, as a native, ought to know. \* \* \* Have just put the letters of the Alphabet before Pig, hoping he would spell out the name of the locality, and give us fur-

ther information about our road to Khiva. Pig either obstinate, stupid, or still in a sulky jealous pet about Horse. All he would do was, first to spell out—"S-H-E L-O-V-E-S Y-O-U," and then to grunt at the Sleigh-driver, as if under the impression that he was going through the ordinary performance, and answering my question, "Who is the handsomest man here?"—when he ought, by right, to select a visitor. Pig no use. Sleigh-driver doesn't know country. He says, "O overfed and much-caressed Son of distinguished Parents," — this means *me* — "there is a *sheebeenski* nigh at hand, kept by a brother of mine. Let us go thither, and inquire our way." Refused.

*Saturday.*—Crossed the Oxus. This is the fifth time in three days that we've crossed the Oxus. Either the river winds (I don't mean breezes, but winds with a long poetic "i") considerably, or we are travelling in a circle.

Perhaps we are ; if so, it's the fault of the Circus Horse, who, having been accustomed to going round and round, can't go straight. Met a Kirghiz-man. A Kirghiz-man is a sort of travelling butcher, who sells *kirghizes* (i.e. Tartaric for carcasses). Meat is cheap out here, and, if exported by a Company, might run the American market in London hard. Asked the Kirghiz-man in to dinner, and begged him to bring his own food with him. He did so. Excellent dinner. Treated him to hot *wickski* and water, strong. It brought tears into his eyes. We were all much affected. More hot *wickski*, with less water. More tears. Gave a thimbleful to the Pig. When the Kirghiz-man saw the Pig seated at our humble board, he could stand it no longer, but raising his glass in the air, cried, "Ould Oireland for iver!" and tossed it off at a gulp. After this we entered freely into conversation. He informed me that he had been brought up as an Irishman, but had not seen his country

for many years. More *wickski*. More tears. He sang a sporting song, composed by himself, about—

“ ’Tis on the Oxus  
We hunt the foxus.”

But I forget the rest, except that it had a chorus that sounded like “Shandygaff mavourneen!” and was, I think, in praise of that excellent compound. About 10 P.M. we sat down to a hand at whist. The party consisted of the Pig (as Dummy and my partner), the Sleigh-man (who doesn’t know the game well) and the Chevalier O’Leary (as he likes to be called in private life) being partners. Pig and self played all we knew. Half-a-rouble points, and two roubles on the rub. Self and Partner won first rub ; also second ; also third. More *wickski*. Chevalier proposed fresh arrangement of partners. Acceded to his request. As we were changing our seats, the Chevalier swore he heard the Pig whispering to me in passing. I denied it, and as-

serted the impossibility of such an occurrence. The Chevalier asked me if I'd never heard of a "Pig's whisper." I replied, "Never! Is it a song?" (N.B.—If it isn't, good idea for a song, "*The Pig's Whisper*"—with accompaniment for the *piggolo*.) Chevalier very angry. More *wickski*. Sleigh-driver and self won next rub. Chevalier violent. Row. We threatened to expose him to the Russian authorities, at the next *Polisstashunski*, as an Irish spy, if he didn't pay up all he owed. The Chevalier, overcome by the force of our arguments (the Sleigh-driver is just six feet, and powerful in proportion), handed over the coin. We parted—at least *he* "parted"—and we rode on quickly in the direction of Khiva. N.B.—Crossed the Oxus for the sixth time.

*Sunday*.—Halt of the Caravan. Passed the morning in reading the Pig and the Sleigh-driver a series of touching discourses: first, on the sin of cheating at cards; secondly, on



the danger of being found out; thirdly, on the fidelity to employers; fourthly, on gratitude to benefactors. After *lunchski*, taught the Pig some Sunday games with the Alphabet, teaching him the answers to such questions as, "Where was Moses when the candle went out?" "Who took in the first sporting paper?" and other queries from the Catechism. I fear that the Sleigh-man has no fixed principles. He likes hearing a bell ring, and has a Sunday hat, but they don't convey to his mind any distinct notion of what time of day it is. He has never heard of either a Pew-opener or a Beadle. Could you not send out some portraits of celebrated Pew-openers and Beadles? And get up a subscription for my Sleigh-driver's conversion. He'd like it, and so should I.

*Sunday over.*—On to Khiva. Met a Post with letters. Couldn't read the letters. I think we are on the right road now.

*Monday, 11 A.M.*—Crossed the Oxus for the seventh time. That's the worst of a Circus Horse. And as the Donkey wouldn't go, we were compelled to leave him behind. If I could only find my compass, I might keep the Horse straight. Snow thick. My new Frigimometer (especially invented for this climate, and patented, of course) marks the temperature at '000075° below Double Zero. This is cold! Somebody coming.

\* \* \* \* \*

Nothing is more important for the Public at home, whether intending individually, or collectively, to ride to Khiva, than to understand the country. In case of our being drawn into a war, let me give this hint to the Government: *The Frontier is better for seeing than the back-tier. It is easily defended, and without any expense to speak of.* Send me out a few good Policemen of the A Division who know their business, I'll go out as a Special, with a Police Staff, and undertake to clear the

place of any Russians. India is safe for the present, but Khiva ought to be our Bow Street, and myself the Sitting Magistrate.

From riding so much—and, mind, a donkey is quite another sort of animal to a horse (let me tell the Public, who rightly admire Captain Burnaby, that it isn't every cross-country man who has a good seat on a donkey)—I have an excellent seat; and, therefore, as the Easterns know this, they would receive *me* as a Sitting Magistrate, where they would look with contempt on an unknown individual, however great his other qualifications might be. Here, riding on a donkey is a compliment to the Natives. Here follows my map, which, if rough, is at least drawn by an honest hand, and will prove invaluable:—

covered deceptive volcano. (*Mentioned by the Latin Poet, "Arma virumque volcano."*) 14. Frozen Lake. Good effect with a lime-light. Excellent place for a Skating Club. Easily crossed by Troops, if supplied with my new (patented) rink skates. *a, b, c, d, e, f.* Boarding-houses on the borders. Most important strategical position. Great chance for a big Hotel and a Theatre. Put Police at the doors, and don't allow any Russian to come in without an Order. No one admitted after 7.30 P.M. No fees. 15. My shortest, quickest, and cheapest way back to London, *viâ* Monaco and Paris.



## CHAPTER V.

*(Continued and Forwarded by Private Wire.)*

*To-day.*—Have been unwell for a day or two on the road to Khiva, but am now quite re-khiva'd. (Pun duly patented and registered as a newspaper for transmission abroad.) Just met a Roumaniac coming from Roumania. They are all Roumaniacs in Roumania. Asked him if he had heard any war reports. He replied, "O son of many distinguished parents, O very much overfed and polished one, I haven't." He went on to add that only the reports he *had* heard were of guns in the distance.

Met several people going the other way, all dressed in different costumes, some with beards, some with no beards, some with

moustachios, some with no moustachios, some with bald heads, some with full flowing wigs, some with long noses and green spectacles, others with short noses and blue spectacles, and so on. Soon found out (on their removing their false noses, beards, &c.,) that they were Russian Spies in disguise. They went through a short gymnastic entertainment and left early. If any Theatrical Manager wants some *Vokeski* amusements for his next Christmas Pantomime, he'd better give me *carte blanche* to engage this Band of Russian Spies. It would be a highly spies'd entertainment. (Pun patented and protected by Vic. V. cap. 6.)

*Day after.*—Met a Fair Circassian. Addressed her with “Where are you going to, my pretty maid?” in her own native tongue. Struck me—the idea struck me, not the Fair Circassian—that she would do for the *Princess Olinska* in *Mazeppa*. Engaged her. The only

question is now, can I play *Mazeppa* with my present lot? And do I want a licence? What will the Lord Chamberlain say? My *corps* consists of self (as *Mazeppa*), Sleigh-driver, and his Boy, Fair Circassian, and the Circus Horse. The Donkey could be got up as a Wolf, and could be taught to pursue me. The Pig is a difficulty; but being already so remarkably clever, I fancy that with a little more arithmetical training with tickets and passes, he might become an invaluable check-taker, or better still, an acting-manager for the front of the house; and this would not only save a salary, but also be an attraction, if properly announced in the bills, thus, "Money taken at the doors by the Learned Pig. All applications on business connected with the management must be made to the Pig!" And in these times when anything from the East creates an excitement, I could advertise him as, "Hog, the Ex-King of Basan!" But these are day-dreams. On to

Khiva! Haven't seen the Oxus lately, from which circumstance I gather that the Sleigh-driver has got the Circus Horse to go straight for once.

*Next day.*—Met a few small Boys. Engaged them. New idea—advertise myself and company as “Dr. Larx and His Little Men!” Agent in advance much wanted. Pig no good. If he went on alone he might get into difficulties with the wolves. He'd be safe from the nomad tribes *en route*, as their religious tenets are generally anti-pig, and on this one point they are a Pig-culiar, but not a Pig-culinary, people. This is what I say when I'm *crackling* a joke with a friend. The Sleigh-driver has begun to learn English. How will this end? Wish I had a book of *Mazeppa*. Quite forgot to bring one with me. Shall have to make it up from memory. I remember the funny man in it—*Drolinski*. Weather cold. My frigidometer down to Zero-under-line. Very low,



note this. I write this before going to bed. Think I hear wolves. No! . . . Only the Pig snoring. Wish I could think of a good name for the Pig in the handbills. A German name always looks artistic, and Herr von Gruntz wouldn't be bad. I'll ask him when he wakes, and get him to spell it out on the Alphabet. If he doesn't like it, he shan't have it. What a pet this Pig is! I'm spoiling him, I'm afraid. Oft on a stilly night, when his head is aching after his day's mental strain of the performance—for he is a litter-ary Pig, bless him!—I sit by his little couch, and sing him to sleep, the Sleigh-driver playing on the *banjoski* (a Tartar instrument with one string and a half and two screws at the top, played with the thumb of the left hand), with the air, "*Hush-a-bye, Bacon!*" from my exquisite Russian adaptation of the celebrated Triumviretta, which will be published (shortly) at St. Petersburg under the title of "*Coxus and Boxus on the Oxus.*" So runs the world away! Good

night! . . . Jumped out of bed again just to jot down this idea. Shall call my Sleigh-driver, Herr Wag'ner. Perhaps it will frighten the wolves.

*To-morrow.*—Thought it would never come. Am writing, while driving in the sleigh-caravan, the first Act of *Mazeppa*. Pig hard at his studies. Stopped for *lunchski* with Fair Circassian at *Kissenuff*. She *has* got an appetite. Played three games at Cribbage with Pig. Pig backed by Fair Circassian (who said I cheated) and Sleigh-driver. Lost twenty roubles. Fair Circassian insisted on being paid on the spot. Row. No more Cribbage. Pig ungrateful, and knows too much. Sleigh-driver's Boy sharp, though. I was just on the point of handing over the coin, for one cannot keep a Lady waiting, when the Boy rushes in, his hair standing on end, his face pale, his dress disordered, crying out “Wolves!!”

In a second I was master of the situation. My purse went back again into my pocket. Horse harnessed. Donkey put on tandem fashion. Circassian jumped in. Pig anywhere. Little Boys stowed under the apron. Sleigh-driver (a very nervous man wrapped up in thick capes), on to his box. Crack goes the whip. Sleigh-driver's Boy up behind. Bells jingle. Away! Away! Wolves after us in full cry!! Imagine the horror of the situation!! More in my next, if I live to tell the tale!! The next halting-place is *Gladit-zova*. Wish we were there. Again we are urging on our wild career. There must be at least a thousand wolves behind us. I count them through my telescope, which brings them within reach of my self-acting arithmetical machine. There are exactly nine hundred and ninety-eight. I telegraph this to you—perhaps for the last time. Please send out cheque by messenger, it *may* keep the wolf from the carriage-door. Snow falling, wolves

howling, thunder, lightning, lights down, hats off in front, music!! . . . . Ha! they come!!

*Note by the Editor.*—How the Diary is sent to us week after week is really wonderful. Our Confidential Boy in the front office takes it in regularly, and says that the messenger who delivers it is above suspicion. We begin to suspect the Confidential Boy. In the interests of the public we have hired a detective to watch the Confidential Boy. No collusion. We *will* know the truth. Of course if our Riding Representative *is* in danger, there may be yet time to send out assistance.

## CHAPTER VI.

*An awful time of it with Wolves—A wonderful escape.  
(Communicated by Private Wire).*

I BREATHE again. (“*Let me Breathe Again!*” Words by Your Own R.R., music by Dr. Sullivan. Shortly.) . . . Such a day we’ve been having! But safe at last, and I stop to telegraph the good news to you, which you will receive as usual by Private Wire. (By the way news arrived here that you’ve had a picture of *me* riding on a Pig to Khiva. No, Sir, I am not in the habit of riding piggy-back.)\*

In the following account, *I have not trusted*

\* How *could* he have heard this? There is some mystery here. But we will fathom it or perish in the attempt.—ED.

to my imagination, but have referred to my Diary, which, despite all difficulties and dangers, insuperable by less hardy Norsemen than myself, I was able to keep, during the terrible hours of the past eventful Monday ("Black Monday"—Old Russian style—no connection with any other Kalendar).

5.30 A.M.—Sleigh-driver wrapped up in thick capes—five of them—on the box. Sleigh-driver's Boy up behind with buns to feed the wolves. This was a happy idea of mine, based upon early reminiscences of what the animals at the Zoological Gardens used to like. I never yet knew a wolf, or a bear, refuse a bun. Boy has orders to be economical with buns, and *be sure to throw them to the Wolves*. The hood being pulled over us in the carriage, I cannot keep my eye on the Boy. But, in so perilous a situation as this, I hope he is to be trusted. But buns will be buns, and boys will be boys. . . .

5.45.—Wolves heard in the distance. Roar-

E

ing and hooting like one of Herr Wagner's *Walkyrie* laughs. Fair Circassian in fits. Took out scissors, and cut her hair. Beat her hands. Asked her riddles. No answer. She is insensible! *O ciel!* how will this end? . . . We are full inside, but not all right. Horse galloping. Donkey, harnessed tandem-fashion, galloping too. Sleigh-driver cracking his whip. Pig in the boot squeaking deliriously, and gasping for breath. What's in his wind now? . . . More howling from wolves. Five little Boys, engaged to do the acrobat business, huddled up at the bottom of the carriage in a confused heap, so that I cannot distinguish one from another. All crying, and saying, in the Tartar dialect, that they'll tell their mother. What a fearful scene! . . .

6. A.M.—Thick fog. Snow everywhere. Frigidometer down to *minus* ten below double zero. My luxuriant moustaches and beard are all icicles!! I should be worth my weight

in gold (woul'n't I feed up, and avoid all exercise, to be weighed on such an occasion!) as a model for Old Father Christmas on a cake. Fair Circassian woke up. To cheer her, told her the story of *Little Red Riding Hood*, and the *Wolf* pretending to be her grandmother. Fair Circassian in hysterics. I communicate with Boy in the rumble through a small hole. "Are you throwing buns to the wolves?" Boy's answer inaudible. Question repeated. Answer again inaudible. On looking through the hole at him, I see that he is *trying to speak with his mouth full*.

6.15. — Fearful roaring. Wolves on our track. No Buns!! Crossed a river. The Oxus, I fancy. Sleigh-driver says I hired this trap from his master at St. Petersburg for half-a-crown an hour, and a shilling for the driver (himself), and that I havn't given him anything yet. Fancy choosing such a moment to ask for payment! Promise him roubles, *to any amount*, when we get to *Gladitzova*—



the nearest posting town. Three bells: served out rations of *wickski* all round. None to the Boy behind with the bun-box.

7 A.M.—For three-quarters of an hour we've been pursued. A lull at last. Donkey stopped. Fair Circassian wide awake. Says I haven't paid her for the last game of cribbage. Told her it was she who cheated: called her the Unfair Circassian. Wolves heard. Again we urge on our wild career.

8. (*still* A.M.) — Everybody's hair turning white with fright. All except the Sleigh-driver, who has his hat on. The little boys will be old men before the day's out. The wolves nearing us. Nearer—nearer—nearer. . . .

Through the hole at the back I implore the Boy, "Haven't you got *one* bun left?" No! O Greediness, where are thy charms? He has eaten them all himself. Imagine the horror of the situation!

11. (A.M. *old style*.)—Sun beginning to shine through mist. Just light enough to see a

notice-board at the side of the road, "Beware of the Wolves!" Near it is a mile-stone with, I think, "To Khiva" on it. . . . Wolves nearer and nearer. Boys crying. Circassian delicious and kicking. Served out *wickski* to every one except the Sleigh-driver, the Boy with the bun-box, and the Unfair Circassian. Played an extract from the *Götterdämmerung* on the mechanical piano, accompanied with shrieks from the Pig in the boot. Through my telescope I see the effect on the wolves. For a few moments they are puzzled. Oh, if I only had a music-score of the entire work to throw out to them! The mechanical piano is out of order. Under pressure the chords snap. It falls in the snow. Onward! Speed onward, brave Sleigh-driver! We may yet escape!

*One o'clock.*—Time for *lunchski*. Preparations. . . . Suddenly wolves appear within a mile of us. . . . No *lunchski*. . . . Horrid thought! One o'clock must be the hour of

the wolves' *lunchski*. . . . Can the Horse do it? . . . The wolves! The wolves! . . . Send cheque at once . . . this is my last appeal . . . forward it by my friend . . . if we can only give wolves a check. . . .\*

(*Hurried Diary*.)—Boy's hair, in rumble, quite white. Little Acrobat Boys twisted up in knots with sheer fear. Hair quite white. Unfair Circassian swears, despairingly, that she will never accuse me again of cheating at cribbage, and says it was the Sleigh-driver who put her up to it. I make her sign this declaration,—in the belief that she is at her last gasp,—on the back of an envelope. Wolves nearer—within half a mile. I dare use the telescope no longer, it brings the wolves too near. . . .

What shall be our next course? . . . Ha !

\* Very strange ! Putting aside our doubts and misgivings, we *must*, in the name of humanity, see what we can do for him. There yet may be time (if he *is* in peril) to get up a subscription and save him.—ED.

. . . The old story occurs to me—the Russian father and mother who threw over their children to stay the wolves. . . . I've thrown over lots of people in my time, but never children. . . . But necessity is the mother of invention. . . . Wolves within a quarter of a mile. . . . They have stopped to eat the mechanical piano, which fell off some time ago. Through my telescope I see them tearing it to bits. There it goes—octaves, wires, key of G, chord of C. . . . Two wolves are fighting for the Overture of *Semiramide* (which was in a small barrel by itself, with little prickly nails sticking out all over it), and an old wolf is hard on to the mechanical drum-trumpet and cymbal accompaniment in the *finale* of Act Two of the *Huguenots*. . . . Throw out more boxes of tunes—the March from *Norma*, the awful “*Guerra, Guerra!*” chorus from the same, a box with two tunes, “*Suoni la Tromba,*” and “*La ci darem.*” . . . Then my big box of the Incantation Scene in *Der*

*Freischütz*, with imitation of full orchestral accompaniment, including thunder, lightning, and the owl's hooting apparatus—also my Second Tenor box with *vox humana* contrivance for the voice part and chorus in the Rataplan of the *Huguenots*, and the March from the *Prophète*. . . . They have taken the tunes, but this gives us time! Besides, music hath charms to soothe the savage beast. If I only had something plaintive and melodious. . . . Where's my box with *Looking Back* in it? . . . . We are gaining upon them. . . .

## CHAPTER VII.

*(Forwarded as usual by Private Wire.)\**

3 P.M.—They are gaining on us! Their tone since their awful repast is quite changed. I can detect in their howls the notes of the various compositions they have swallowed. Above all, I hear the highest note (by two wolves in unison) of the “*Suoni la Tromba!*” . . . . I shall write an Opera if I ever get out of this sleigh alive! . . . It will be *Mazeppa!* and in one Act a panorama of his wild career, with such orchestration for the wolves as the world has never heard.

\* Next week we shall have something to say about Private Wire. At present we can only guardedly remark that we think a Private Wire is a Wonderful Invention.—ED.

Early application from music-publishers necessary. . . . Cry from the Boy in the rumble. . . . "Oh!" It is a cry of agony. . . . A wolf, in advance of the rest, has come up with him. The Boy, overdosed with buns, was asleep as he sat leaning forward with his head on the hood. Like Achilles, here was one vulnerable point. The wolf saw it! . . .

Halt!—for one instant. Unfair Circassian fainting, Sleigh-driver invisible in his capes. The boot suddenly opens. Pig out furious; flies at wolf. Pig, mad as a hatter. Wolf, a young one, astonished at Pig—never seen a pig before. Deadly encounter. Wolf floored. Triumph. Dance of everybody in the snow. Fireworks. Pig recovered his senses. *Wickski* for Pig. *Wickski* all round. Onward! . . . Wolves eat their companion. . . . Another respite.

5.30.—Donkey and Horse dead beat. If *they* stop, we are lost. They are panting, lame, limping!! Ha! The private telegraph wire

with battery! Attach it to Horse and Donkey. Wire in! Work the battery. Send startling messages to both of them. On they go by electricity! Steam surpassed!!! Saved! Saved!—for the present.

8.—Dinner-time. Still flying onwards. Wolves distanced. Ha! The towers of the old Cathedral of St. Vitus within four miles!!

8.15.—Horror! Wire broken connecting Horse and Donkey. Donkey drops down dead. On examination we find that he has been defunct for some hours past, but his muscular power has been kept in action by the electricity. We leave him for the wolves. On again! On further examination I ascertain, having been something of a Vet in my time, that the horse also has been dead some hours, but the electric current is still passing through the wire to him, and so the muscular action is kept up. This gives the lie to the old Russian proverb about "*no use trying to drive a dead horse.*" I am doing so, and we could win a



Derby like this. What a subject for a legendary poem! The Flying Phantom on the Dead Horse! I must send it to Wagner. He would have preferred it to the *Flying Dutchman*. (I make this note in my Diary with my hands frozen as we gallop onward in the moonlight.)

10.—Night. Moon shining. Battery getting weaker and weaker. Horse consequently more and more feeble. Wolves gaining on us. Now—how about throwing over the children as they did in the story? The Fair Circassian suggests giving the Pig to the wolves. I open the boot. The Pig has overheard us. He has the letters of the Alphabet before him and has spelt out “No, *please don't!*” Touching scene. Reminds me of *Arthur* and *Hubert* in the Tower. *Arthur* (by the learned Pig), *Hubert* (by Myself). This will be a good interlude when the Circus is once started. Would tell in the season at the Egyptian Hall. Music. “*Woodman spare that Pig!!*” . . . Wolves on

us. . . . The towers of *Gladitzova* in sight. . . .  
Electricity stopping. Horse dropping. . . .  
Children *must* be thrown over, *or* the Unfair  
Circassian. . . . Begin with Sleigh-driver's  
Boy. . . . Sleigh-driver's Boy suggests be-  
ginning with Sleigh-driver. . . . The wolves  
are within two-hundred yards of us. . . . It  
must be done. . . . The Sleigh-driver has five  
capcs, a thick fur coat, and a whip. . . . With  
the whip he can defend himself, and the  
wolves will be a long time before they get  
through his capcs, his boots, and<sup>7</sup>at *him*. . . .  
Wolves within one hundred yards. . . . One  
wild cry. . . . A struggle. . . . 'Tis  
done!!! . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

*Gladitzova* at last! At the gate of the town  
the electric battery bursts. The faithful Circus  
Horse drops. Alas! poor *Black Bess*! Thou  
wert a gay lass! Better mare was never  
foaled! Ah! what a chance I've lost in not  
being able to play *Dick Turpin's Ride to*

*Khiva*!! Well, well, thou wert eighteenpence an hour, and the contract was, *distinctly, from London to Khiva*. Thy master will lose his money, for thou, O gallant mare, hast broken the contract, and my heart! *Qui facit per alium facit per se*, and I do not pay thine owner, my sweet *Black Bess*! Peace to thy manes!—I mean thy mane, for thou hadst but one.

And the Sleigh-driver! He was to have reported himself to the livery stable at *Gladitzova*—but he cannot do so now. Poor fellow! I was to have paid and discharged him at *Khiva*, and here we are at *Gladitzova*, only a few miles from our ultimate destination, and he has broken his agreement through being eaten by the wolves, *and I have therefore no one to pay*. Such is life! I explained all this to the livery stable-keeper here, who is in correspondence with my Sleigh-owner at St. Petersburg. We shall only stop here a night just to give one performance with the Learned Pig, the Hair-

less Circassian, and Our Boys, for the benefit of the Wanderers' Home. Then on to Khiva. We expect to be at Khiva early tomorrow.

My beard and moustache are still in icicles. On applying hot water to my face, it caused my head to swell out suddenly to the size of a pantomime mask. This will be useful in the Circus entertainment, but I can't go out till night time. However, it's good for business. The hair of Our Boys is quite white by now. They are premature old men. Ah me! a thing to shudder at, not to see. On to Khiva. Where's cheque?

\* \* \* \* \*

I have just walked round the ramparts. In the distance I can see Khiva. It is within a walk. But I am bound to *ride*—not *walk*—to Khiva, and I am a man of my word.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*(Diary continued, and forwarded by Private Wire.)\**

*The Saturday after last.*—Gone wrong again. Got a new horse at Gladitzova (on sale or return), and a new boy, who said he knew the way. Discharged new boy at third mile-post.

\* It may have been observed that we have allowed the last two letters to appear without (comparatively) note or comment. The fact is we have been compelled to observe the utmost caution, as well in the public's interest as in our own. But for our certainty that our Khivan Correspondent is *not* within reading distance, we should not append this Note. Fortunately, we are in possession of his entire MS., which we shall either withhold or publish as may suit our convenience and serve the cause of Truth and Justice. We are not prepared, as in view of legal proceedings, to *swear* that at this moment our Riding Representative is *not* "riding to Khiva." He *may* be. We have taken Counsel's opinion, and Counsel says that "in a criminal case, where the charge must be verbally accurate, and the evidence be in strict accordance with the

Met a man, who said that wasn't Khiva in the distance, but another place. Took first turning to the right. Thaw. Summer beginning.

wording of the charge, it would be *very* difficult to *prove* that, at some time or other, during the course of these letters, our Correspondent was *not* riding *in the direction of Khiva*, as he has alleged. For example, it must first," says Counsel's opinion, "be proved (*vide* 1 Will. c. 2) that he was *not* riding—and all along the *onus probandi* is with the prosecution ; secondly, it must be proved that, if riding, he was *not* riding to Khiva. Now, it is evident," says Counsel's opinion, "that any person on mounting his horse in Park Lane, for example, is competent (*vide Crosse & Blackwell's Digest*, 2 O.T.) to remark to those about him, 'I am now going to ride to Khiva,' and may, to give a local colour to the assertion, actually turn his horse's head in an Eastern or a South-eastern or South-western direction, according to his (the rider's) ideas of where Khiva may be situated. For his *bonâ fide* intention having been announced of *riding to Khiva*, the law presumes that a *sane* person knows what he is about, and is acquainted with the road he has undertaken to travel ; on which road only by mistake, to which all human beings are liable, or by misadventure, to which all human beings are subject (*vide* decision in *Fowl and Pullitt's case*, under 10 Hen. 8, *Egg, Shelley, and Boyle's Reports*.)

*Mid-day, Saturday.*—Came up with a private caravan, consisting of an aged Moldavian, an old Wallachian, a Merryvingian (such a funny fellow!), a couple of Kirghiz-men, and one Roumaniac from Kolni-Hatchski. The old Wallachian, a bald man without any moustache or beard, was very unwell. He said he

he could be possibly supposed to go wrong. Therefore," continues Counsel's opinion, "though the Correspondent in question *may never have left London*, yet if he were *bona fide* and of honest though mistaken purpose, perpetually riding to Khiva, there would be, and could be, no basis for a criminal prosecution, nor, indeed, any safe ground for an action at common law." (*Vide 4 Geo. 2, c. Gunn's Reports, edited by J. Ingo.*)

Thus advised, it is necessary for us to be cautious and reserved. We may mention, however, that we have secured Private Wire, and have, at a considerable outlay in the shape of an annuity to his mother, got a firm hold on Our Own Confidential Boy. We are now going to take Counsel's opinion again. Our first Counsel advised us to take Counsel's opinion every two hours, and the last thing before retiring to rest, until we found some relief. We intend doing so ; and hope to satisfy the public as to the *mala fides* or *bona fides* of Our Correspondent before a fortnight has passed.—ED.

would make his will, and leave me everything if I would only cure him. Felt his pulse. Having no medicine by me, gave him some of Mr. Brillantine's Essential Regeneratative Stimuloso—(a powerful oil for strengthening and darkening the hair. *N.B.—Here would be a fine opportunity for taking advantage of my riding to Khiva as a Travelling Advertising Agent. Let everybody who has anything to puff send out samples at once to Me, and I'll try 'em on the Khans and other people! My charges will be moderate, but payment in advance, to my agent in London, is absolutely indispensable. No Prior Pay, no Posterior Puff!*)—He drank it all, and became insensible. We are stopping on our road, awaiting the consequences anxiously.

In the evening amused the Party with the Learned Pig, cribbage (won five games out of six), and an acrobatic performance from Our Boys. Unfair Circassian sulky.

*Midnight.*—Patient still insensible.

1 A.M. *Sunday.*—Observed the day strictly,



so as to set a good example. Put on Sunday coat, and went round with a soup plate, as if for a collection after a charity sermon. The little boys subscribed waistcoat buttons handsomely. The others promised payment when their friend should be cured. Watched patient. Effect of Regenerating Stimulant gradually perceptible on the bald Wallachian. Hair sprouting out in various parts. Patient recovering consciousness : irritable. He is suffering from an entirely new illness, which, on the homœopathic principle, has driven out the other. It makes him fretful, like cutting his teeth, only that *this* is cutting his hair.

3 A.M.—Whiskers appearing. Patient restless and feverish.

4 A.M.—Bald head suddenly breaking out into a sort of brown stubble. Patient using violent language in his native tongue. To soothe him, his friends sing a part-song, and play curious musical instruments.

5 A.M.—Hair two inches long on head. First appearance of moustaches. Lengthening and darkening of eyelashes. Patient being held down in bed.

6 A.M.—Rapid growth of beard, moustaches, and hair of head. A crisis. We sit on him all at once, and place the Pig on him to keep him warm. His friends still singing and playing on instruments. *Wickski* all round. Daylight.

7 A.M.—Thank Heaven! Patient asleep. Crisis past. He is recovering, after an entire change of hair produced by one dose of Bril-lantine's Regeneratative Stimuloso, sold in bottles from 3s. 6d. upwards. Apply to *me*, through my agent in town. None genuine without my signature. I re-name it on the spot, the "Khivan Kurative Kompound." Pig spells it out on the Alphabet. This will be a point for the Show. When I ask him what's the best remedy for anything, he'll spell out "Khivan Kurative Kompound," and I shall

say that's the Pigs al-litter-ation. The *jeu de mot* will be sold with the bottle, and some allowance made to the purchaser on its return. More *wickski*. All to bed.

\* \* \* Anxious week passed in watching patient. Won several games of *écarté*, but lost at cribbage. They *know* cribbage, but spell it *Kribwich* (pronounced as we pronounce Greenwich), so that I didn't recognise it.

*Sunday*.—Spent it becomingly. Rang bells, as if for Church. Then all slept, as if during a sermon. Heard Pig his catechism. Set an excellent example to the four Tartar boys, and taught them one of Bishop's glees. The boys stood in a row, with their hands behind them, and their chins up in the air. I shall call them the *Evanski Choristors*. They sang "*Peace be upon thee, Lady Bright!*" to the Fair Circasian, who was much pleased. The lines run—

"Peace be upon thee, Lady Bright ;  
Sleep while we sing, good night, good night !"

Don't remember any more of it, but eked out the glee by repeating it over and over again. All delighted. The stupid Fair Circassian explained to the Caravan people that *she* was "Lady Bright." They got this into their idiotic heads, and would address me as Lord Bright. They think I am on a diplomatic mission to make peace between Turkey and Russia. Served *wickski* all round, and explained. Hairy Patient progressing. Before retiring, sent in my bill for medical attendance, making up prescription, &c. Hairy Patient promised to settle in the morning. All to bed.

*Monday.*—Woke late. Caravan party disappeared. Gone without paying. What ingratitude ! Think I hear them in the distance singing, "*Peace be upon thee, Lady Bright !*" Pack up, and pursuit.

10 A.M.—No signs of them. Crossed a river. Examined map. Only one river mentioned in it. The Oxus. If it *is* the Oxus, we ought to be near Khiva. If it isn't the Oxus, where are we?

11 A.M.—Fine day. Warm. Wind S.W., by E.C. Clear. No wolves. Nothing visible anywhere. Stopped for breakfast, and worked at fitting up my new sleigh with a "speaking machine," on the principle of the one in the Grand Hotel, Paris. It is connected with a lightning conductor which stands up at the back of the sleigh. The Conductor is thus made to exclaim, at intervals, "Khiva! Khiva! Full inside! All right!" This will have the double effect of keeping off wolves and attracting any passengers, as there is plenty of room in it, and at three kopecks a head an honest rouble may be turned. The sleigh is fitted with a *pair* of boots, instead of one boot, which is a novelty. Lady Bright, the Unfair Circassian, quarrelsome. Shall drop

her at Khiva, and the boys too. Rations running short. They threaten to mutiny and eat the Pig. A firm hand is necessary. Onward. Ha! Khiva in sight. . . An anxious night . . . on guard before the boot where the Pig is. . . Through a slit in the covering of the sleigh I hear the confoundedly Unfair Circassian telling the Tartar boys how nice *ham* is! and what delicious things pig's trotters are! Then she describes crackling and pig's fry!! The Tartar boys, by their religion, are bound to detest pig. She is trying to convert them. Hate proselytism. What a subject for a romance, *The Pig and the Proselyte! a Tale of the Great Atrocity!* . . . Another moment I burst in upon them! I begged them to remember the teaching they received on their mother's knee. They writhe . . . they *do* remember the teaching they received on their mother's knee . . . I have struck a wrong chord . . I adjured them by all the glories of their ancient creed not to apostatise . . .

I drew a fearful picture—or a *picture*—of the pains of indigestion . . they were touched, and the Pig is untouched! The Unfair Circassian flew at me . . . ah! what a night of terror!!! . . *Wickski* all round . . . quiet restored . . . we speed onward . . .

*Wednesday, 4 A.M.*—Khiva—it must be Khiva—in sight . . . at last! . . .

*Same Day, 6 A.M.*—At the gates. Saw a Sentinel. “*Ve Gates?*” I asked. (German *jeu de mot*—one of my *splittersideren*—quite new.) He presented his musket—I presented *wickski*. “O much-caressed son of extraordinary overfed parents!” he exclaimed, “I never take anything so early, except—a prisoner.” . . . .

*Same Evening.*—In a Russian gaol. At least, I think it's Russian. I don't know whether I'm at Khiva, or not? no one will tell me. All I can ascertain from the Gaoler's Daughter (a pretty black-eyed

girl, at least so I call her in an undertone, when it's dusk) is that this is a Russian outpost, but that the name and the whereabouts are a secret. "Can I send a letter by this outpost?" I inquired. She smiled; and hearing her father's keys clanking in the corridor, she retired. . . . I am alone. . . . Boys, Circassian, and Pig, all gone. I contrive to write my Diary by ingeniously (for I am never at a loss) making some ink out of brick-dust mixed with the remains of my *wickski*. It is an admirable invention, will cost half the price of the best ink, and can be patented, on my return, as "*Brickski-Wickski*, or Indelible Khivan Inkorrosive Ink." I have sharpened an old rusty nail, and am now writing this on a leaden plate, placed here for my supper, which (the plate, I mean) I shall throw out of window, in the hope of its being found, and forwarded to you. I have no Private Wire. Nothing. I shall write on the leaden plates (throwing



them out of window as soon as finished, and only hope they won't fall on any unfriendly head), then on my pocket-handkerchiefs, linen, and sheets. They will be sheets ready for the Press. The Gaoler's Daughter addresses me as "Lord Bright." The Circassian has told her this. Please get up a subscription for "Lord Bright, the Unhappy Nobleman now languishing in a Russian gaol at——" . . . . I'll let you know where it is when *they* tell me . . . . but *do* get up an agitation, and memorialise the Government. Couldn't you induce W. E. G. to make speeches about me? Tell him it's the Turks who are "atrocifying" me—not the Russians. My agent in town will receive subscriptions, and will forward to me safely any packages of lint, soap, books, warm clothing, champagne, haunches of venison, &c., &c., "all addressed to the Unhappy Nobleman," &c., &c. *Work the Oracle*, or, if you don't, I shall never get to Khiva! There's a subject for a song in prison! It

would sell immensely. Composed by Our Riding Representative (or Representative for the East Riding) when in prison at —*tz*. (It is pretty sure to end in “*tz*” or “*owa*” until we get more frontierwards, when it ends in “*m* or *n*,” as the case may be). The words would be something to this effect:—

“ Then work the oracle, my boys,  
And use the mighty lever  
To raise subscriptions, or, my boys,  
I'll *never* get to Khiva !

*Chorus.* With my (*the singer's and composer's*) tol  
de rol de riddle lol,  
Tol de rol de riva.  
O tol de rol de riddle lol,  
When *shall* I get to Khiva ? ”

You see my spirits are still above proof. . . .  
Hark! a footstep. Hush! 'tis the night-watch! he guards my lonely cell. I must hide my leaden plates, sheets, and writing apparatus! . . . 'Tis the Gaoler. He will enter and find me whistling in my sleep . . . will write more directly he has gone. . . .

## CHAPTER IX.

*Still in Prison—Diary continued under Difficulties, but sent all the same with Marvellous Regularity.\**

*Evening.* — What evening I don't know. Ah, pity me in prison! If they still continue to think I am "Lord Bright," they will perhaps have an iron mask made for me, and immure me here for years. If they have any sense of humour, they wouldn't have an iron mask, but a pantomime head with goggle eyes

\* All we have to remark at present is, that, acting on Counsel's opinion, and we've had some of the best that could be got at the Bar, sending the Office Boy out for it regularly every two hours in this hot weather, we reserve what we have to say till the right moment comes for speaking, and then from Fleet Street to Bow Street is but a step, and thence——But, of course, *we may be wrong after all.*—ED.

and a perpetual grin, so that when I showed my face at the window ("*Only a face at the Window*"—song for the occasion), the warders could say to any outsiders, "See how happy he is! always laughing!" . . . . I am writing this, with a sharp nail, on my pocket-handkerchief. . . . Perhaps the washerwoman will see it. . . . *What will she do with it?* . . . . All hangs on that. I tremble for the fate of the Pig. . . . I am afraid that these Borderers don't kill and eat pigs, they torture them. . . . Still, Herr Grüntz (the Pig) has got the bag of letters hung round his neck, and if they'll only spread them out before his snout, he'll introduce himself. . . . But ah! should Herr Grüntz meet the Cossack torturer with his knout, which will get the best of it—that snout or this knout? (Another idea for a book of travels—ideas flow in prison—it is so quiet—*The Knout and the Snout—a Traveller's Tale.*)

*Sunset.*—The Gaoler's Daughter came to

fetch my things for the *woshski* . . . . I pressed her hand . . . . I cannot see her face . . . . she placed her fingers on her lips . . . . while there is life there is hope. . . . She is gone . . . again I am alone, with a white mouse in the corner, and a spider that has come out for an evening walk through its web in the angle of the window. Sitting down suddenly, I become aware of my pack of cards in my tail coat-pocket, for I was in evening dress when taken prisoner (being generally in this costume, in case of having to give an entertainment, impromptu, with Pig and Circassian and tricks with cards), and I have not yet been able to change.

*Sun down—Lights up.*—Commenced teaching the White Mouse *écarté*. An apt pupil, but possessing neither the solidity nor gravity of the Pig. Governor sent to say he was coming to see me. He entered, preceded by two men bearing *dipzkis* (*i.e.* long thin tallow candles). On their retiring he discovered himself. *The*

*patient whom I had cured with the hair oil!* He produced my pocket-handkerchief, which had been sent to the Washerwoman, and which the Washerwoman had immediately forwarded to *him*. He advised me not to do it again, for it would only be waste of time, as the Washerwoman, a stupid person, invariably sent everything of the sort to *him*, and had to be rewarded for her fidelity by the Government, out of which he (the Governor) did not make anything, except by way of adding to his stock of linen. He had, he added, quite a remarkable collection of haberdashery, for all the prisoners wrote on their pocket-handkerchiefs, shirt-fronts, false collars, &c., and so he had not had a linendraper's bill for years. I undertook not to do it again, and the Governor promised (out of gratitude for his cure, and his magnificent growth of hair and whiskers, in consequence of the dose of hair oil) to wink at anything I might do in the way of escape. To show his friendly spirit, he

began by winking at the cards and the White Mouse. Then he withdrew, but most thoughtfully returned to wink at the spider, and then, having winked at everything all round, he left, not however before he had lost one rouble to me (and paid) over the three-card trick, which was evidently quite new to him. What a charm there is in novelty!

*Night.*—Night-lights brought by the Gaoler and his daughter. She wears half a veil concealing the lower portion of her face and the tip of her nose. She has fine eyes. For a consideration they smuggled in some *wickski*. From my cell I can see one of the small windows of the Governor's room. It is a mere slit, just enough for the Governor's eye, which I recognised placed close to it; and, true to his promise, he is winking at the *wickski*. We are safe. Gaoler brought in his own pack of cards (he said he never trusted prisoners), and insisted on teaching me a Cossack game, at which he is an adept,

called *Ykooch Dnilb*. He dealt out about fifteen packets face downwards, and asked me to choose and give him one of them. If the card at the bottom of the pack so chosen should be an ace, then he would pay me on all the other bottom cards (except aces, for "ties pay dealer"), and if it should be the Czar (the highest) then I should pay him on all. A clever player at this game can, *I believe*, so arrange as to "force" the choice of the pack. I was hesitating, when suddenly the White Mouse ran out, hopped on to one of the packs, and ran off again in a frightened manner. Gaoler swore he'd have the hole stopped up. It suddenly occurred to me that I would choose the pack on which the Mouse had squatted, and give *that* to the Gaoler. Scarcely had I placed my finger, hesitatingly, on the pack in question, when, happening to look up, I caught the Gaoler's Daughter's eye (or the eye of the Gaoler's Daughter—*vide* first Russian Exercise in *Little Peter's Primer*),



which, by its expression, coupled with a movement of her hands and head, seemed to say, "Oh, my! what a born idiot you are!!" . . . . Too late to retract without a row. Gaoler insisted on taking up the pack where I had placed my finger. I protested. I said I only placed my finger there by accident. Gaoler savage. I yielded. I gave him the Czar! Gaoler's Daughter's eye seemed to say, "Well, you *are* an ass!" Yes; but once bitten, twice fly. And then, as I reminded the Gaoler, *we hadn't settled to play for anything*. True. In his eagerness the old humbug had forgotten this. Would I make it a rouble on each pack for the next deal? Certainly—a rouble or a double—that is, a two-rouble piece. Deal as before. I hesitated which to choose. Oddly enough, the Spider came down on a long line, hung over a pack, and then ran up again and disappeared. I looked up: Gaoler's Daughter's eye said "*Don't!*" and, by a movement of her charming head, indicated

that the pack in the right-hand corner would be *the* one to try. All this in a second. It flashed across me *that the Spider and the Mouse had been trained by the Gaoler*. That they are, so to speak, "*his creatures*." I followed the girl's advice and chose the pack in the right-hand corner. Gaoler turned pale. Asked me if I wasn't mistaken. I replied, politely, "No," and presented him with *the Ace!!* There were no other aces turned up, and *he had to pay me on all*. A double per pack was, for fourteen packs, fourteen doubles, that is, twenty-eight roubles. I asked him for the money playfully, and said, by way of a *jeu de mot*, "I'm sorry to t-rouble you for the coin." He was *wild*. He kicked out at the White Mouse, which was innocently standing on its hind legs in the corner, and sent it flying into its hole, then threw the three-legged stool at the Spider, who was out of sight in a jiffey. The stool broke the web and the window-pane. "Who breaks, pays," I

observed. (My experience is, however, that who "breaks," generally *doesn't* "pay.") Gaoler wouldn't play again, but said he would go and get me the money, as he hadn't so much about him. Before I could answer, I saw his daughter, behind his back, speaking to me in the dumb alphabet. She said, "*Let him go : as he owes you money, you won't see him again.*" In a second it flashed across me . . . the one obstacle to my escape was removed . . . . *I had got rid of my Gaoler !*

*Midnight.*—Gaoler departed. Meditating on the events of the evening, I could not help arriving at the conclusion that the Gaoler must be an uncommonly clever man. But what a pity to see talent like his so thrown away ! Because really he must have taken no end of pains to train the White Mouse and the Spider. And what *could* he have got by it ? A few roubles from an occasional prisoner. If I could only have trusted him, I would have proposed a partnership in "a travelling

business.” But I am afraid he would be too suspicious for a partner. . . . All quiet. From my window I think I can still see the Governor’s eye winking at everything that is going on under his nose. Hark! From below I hear the splash of the waters that wash the base of the tower. . . . On the drawbridge I can distinguish the sentinel’s tramp and the password for the night. For strategic purposes it is a Turkish word—“*Bosh*.” “*Khiva là ?*” is the question. “*Bosh*” is the answer. “*Pass Bosh, and all’s well !*” is the reply.

The bell of the old Kromesky (the name of a chapel belonging to the Tartar Dissenters), sounds two. Then all is still. . . . I lean against the prison-bars, and wonder whether . . . Hark! . . . A barrel-organ played *pianissimo* . . . and the tune . . . “*Oh Leonora Addio !*” from *Trovatore* . . . so suggestive—*Leonora* outside, *Manrico* within . . . I am *Manrico* within, and I commence the

strain : then the quick part (*Leonora's* portion) is taken up, outside, by the organ. Why not by the human voice? Because, clearly, it is *somebody who can't sing, or has not got a human voice*. Through the pane of glass, broken by the Gaoler in his passion, I stretch out, and see, leaning against the outside wall, an awkward female figure, in an old-fashioned "poke bonnet," playing a small organ. I recognise the organ—it is the one that we have never parted with on our tour, it having been invariably used for accompaniment to the Pig's performance, and it was the handle of this I had taught the Pig himself to turn . . . It is the Pig . . . disguised in the poke bonnet . . . . the Pig in the Poke!! . . . . He sees me, and in the moonlight spreads the letters out before him, "*Escape by Private wire.*" Suddenly, under my nose, comes up the side of the tower,—the Wire. I fasten it to the top bar. I stop for one moment to put the cards and the White Mouse in my pocket

(he seemed to implore so hard not to be left behind), and descend the Wire. . . . I am descending slowly but surely . . . . and writing this with the other hand so as not to lose time . . . .

As I go down I catch sight of the Governor's eye, through the slit in the wall, winking at my escape . . . . Bless him! . . . . In the court-yard the Governor's carriage, the Gaoler's Daughter, the Pig in disguise, and the barrel-organ are waiting. Not a moment is to be lost. . . . We gain the first drawbridge. . . . "*Khiva là ?*" "*Bosh !*" I reply, imitating the Governor's voice (I shall add "Imitations" to my Entertainment, on my return). "*Pass Bosh, and all's well !*"

Once again we are challenged . . . . same business as before . . . . at last we are out on the high road . . . . and free!! "But," as the Pig says on his letters, "we have now a squeak for it."

## CHAPTER X.

*(Communicated by Private Wire.—Thrilling Adventures.)*

MY Khivan Karavan now consists of the Pig and Alphabet in the boot (beautiful sign for an old Inn, "The Pig and Alphabet"), with the barrel-organ (which was instrumental in my escape from prison), the Gaoler's Daughter in rumble, the Sleigh-driver's Boy who has stuck to me from the commencement, and it grieves me to be unable to reward such fidelity by paying him his wages—but, after all, this only increases the obligation on my part; and, as I explained to him, "You see, my lad, I am so far from my native land."; Then there's my new horse. It was the Governor of the Prison's horse, or the horse of the Governor of the Prison, or the horse of

the Prison's Governor (*vide Little Peter's Primer. First Russian Exercises*). A better or truer mare was never foaled, except the one I had before; alas! poor Bess! Lastly, there's my latest novelty, which accompanied me, in my pocket, from prison—*The Musical Mouse*.

Slight jealousy between the Learned Pig and the Musical Mouse, just as happened before with the Circus horse. Whenever the Pig begins to practise with his letters (as he has to do every day), the Musical Mouse begins to whistle and sing, just to put him out, and make him wild. This annoys the Pig, who spells things wrong, and doesn't answer questions properly. Consequently, I am obliged to beat the Pig. Whereupon he grunts piteously, and spells out, "Cuss that Mouse!" If I could only smooth matters over, and bring them together, it would be a fortune!

The Mouse is invaluable in tricks with cards, having been trained by the Gaoler, who used to cheat his prisoners, the old



villain! The Mouse—I've christened him "*Ridiculus Mus-urus Bey*" (and "assisted by Herr Grüntz" will look well in the bill—if I can only bring them together!).

*Night.*—Halt of the Caravan. Spent greater part of night in teaching Pig the Shadow Dance from *Dinorah*, by moonlight.

*Next Day.*—Sun out. Blazing hot. Snow melting all round. Mountains of snow gradually becoming less and less in the distance, under the genial influence of the sun.

3.30 P.M.—Distant mountains melted. First view of Khiva. See distinctly the name over the gate. Gaoler's Daughter comes out of tent.

Strange to say the Gaoler and his daughter had invariably paid their visits to my cell, either in what she romantically termed "the gloaming," or late at night, and as the small *dipskis* (little tallow candles) didn't give much light, *I had never really seen her by day*. Now I *do* see her by day, I should say that her

father *must have been well over seventy, and must have married very early.* I begin to regret the Unfair Circassian.

6 P.M.—Frost commencing. Snow mountains gradually being re-iced. View of Khiva less and less. Dinner. Pig waiting. The Private Band (the Singing Mouse), in attendance. The party consists of self and the Gaoler's Daughter. I am polite to her. Very. I hint that to prevent any scandal (scandal about my *grandmother* !) she had better return to her father, the Gaoler.

With tears in her eyes, she rises from her seat, and throwing her arms round my neck, exclaims, "O son of little overfed ones! *Never* !"

"Nay, my much cared moon-faced daughter of a blooming Turnkey in Asia," I reply, "just think of what the world will say."

"O sweetest little son of much-pampered parents, I care not for the world!" she cried, "I am yours—for ever!"

"You are! You are!" I returned (for it was no sort of use having a row about a mere difference of opinion).

"And O well-rounded and sleekly-combed-and-patted-down-the-centre one, will you always love me as you do now?" she whispered, hanging on to my neck (she weighs sixteen stone if a pound).

"Oh my much-underdone round-of-beef faced" (a great compliment this) "daughter of an elderly, half-paid, underfed Turnkey in Asia," I replied, in my softest tones, "I will love thee always *as much as I do now*," which was strictly true. (For, need I say it, the Poll of my heart is at home, and my heart is true to Poll! bless her dear eyes! And she's just come into a little fortune, so I hear, but this makes no difference to me.)

10 P.M.—Constructed a new frigidometer with an empty bottle, a cork, and a piece of string. (Principle patented.) Frost set in hard. Mountains shaping up to points.

Gaoler's daughter, feverish. Sobbing. What shall I do? I offered to pack up, ride off, and fetch a doctor from Khiva.

"And leave me here?" she exclaimed, furiously. "Why, you pitiful, underbred, overfed son of an eighty-four-tonner!" she screamed, becoming, I regret to say, abusive.

I remonstrated. She called me "A son of a marine gastronome!" and threw a boot at me. Row. I pointed out that I had *meant* well. She gradually calmed down.

10.30.—Bitter cold—snow, ice, sleet. Sat in to supper. *Wickski* and explanation. I make *wickski cobbler*. We ice it in snow, and suck it up through straws. (Shall teach Pig to sit in chair and suck *wickski cobbler* through a straw.) We sit on the bank of the river (the Oxus, I suppose, judging by the position of the stars, as I've lost my maps), sipping our *wickski cobbles*, she and I.

## SONG.

“ We sat by the river, she and I,  
In the happy days when we were young.”

The barrel-organ is by my side, and all is peace and harmony. More *wickski cobbler*, more straws. Ha! do I see my way out of it? 'Tis the last straw that breaks the Cobbler's back . . . . Good. The last straw! She sleeps! My lady sleeps!! Hooray! Now to pack up! and off!! Away to Khiva!! Hark! what is that?

A trill—a sweet, sweet trill . . . . a warble . . . . The Gaoler's Daughter awakes. “What is it?” she murmurs. Not to rudely answer her, I reply, “Nothing.” This does not satisfy her. We listen. Trilling as of a sweet bird continuing,—

“Ha!” she exclaims, a little more than half awake, “it is the Song of the Mud-lark.”

We are beside the river, and the tide is low.

"And how shall I catch the Mudlark?" I asked, as I pensively ground the organ (playing the Russian River Song of *The Little Volga Boy*) and gazed into the starry heavens, still listening to the lovely trill with which my accompaniment was in perfect accord. If I could only have got the Gäoler's Daughter (it struck me) to plunge into the mud after the Mudlark . . . . perhaps . . . . Well, perhaps, she might not have been able to catch that lark. And I—and I should have erected a monument, with the touching inscription, "Sacred to the memory of poor Miss Stick-in-the-Mud, the beautiful Gäoler's Daughter." I should have put in "beautiful," because *de mortuis*, &c. . . . But it was not to be.

"Chuck him a *kopper-kopeck*, Oh son of over-paid and much-muddle-headed parents," she replied sleepily; "and the Mudlark will dive for it."

I hesitated.

"What!" she continued, suddenly rousing

herself, and the Tartar acid, so to speak, effervescing, "you let 'I dare not' wait upon 'I dare!' Give *me* the *kopper*."

It was a brilliant flash. *But it was the last.* The *wickski* cobbler had done its work. I placed the straw in her mouth. By the movement of the straw I could tell which way the breath was . . . . the straw dropped . . . . she sank . . . . breathing heavily . . . . a sweet, peaceful, childlike (for her age) sleep.

11.30.—The trill continued. Lovely!! Ha! I see now! It is the Mouse!! I sat listening—enthralled, silent—by the banks of the rippling Oxus.

*Midnight.*—I make the above notes. Serve out *wickski* to myself, and return to the bank. The moon shines brightly. The Governor's Horse is browsing in the field. The Pig is snoring. The Mouse is singing. The Gaoler's Daughter is murmuring stupid somethings in her sleep. "Lullaby, lullaby! Baker's man!" or whatever the Nursery Rhyme is. I forget

exact quotation. Suddenly I hear a grunt—a restless, irritable grunt.

By my side is the Pig with Alphabet.

What is it?

He spells out the answer. "Can't sleep if that infernal Mouse is to go on whistling and singing all night."

"Pig," I replied (on the Letters), with grim humour, for I was determined not to give in to his whim, "Pig, you're a *bore*!"

He squeaked, and gave a sort of half-laugh, as only pigs can, and retired. To express it, humanly speaking, *the Pig smiled, but never forgave the satire.*

12.30.—I retire for the night. Up with the Mudlark to-morrow, and off to Khiva.

6 A.M.—Awoke by a fearful shriek, something between a whistle and the highest note—C in alto—in the register of that eminent Tenor Signor Timberlegs.

What on earth could it be! I rushed out of the Karavan-tent.



## CHAPTER XI.

*The Last Scene—The Rider carries out his own proposition—Safe return, and explanation all round.*

THE sun had risen in the East. Its warm rays illumined the snow desert for miles. The trackless regions seemed a blaze of dazzling light. . . . What was there to explain the fearful sound that had so shocked my nervous system? . . .

Putting on my blue magnifying glasses, I distinctly made out small feet-tracks in the snow. . . . Heavens! . . . *What* feet? One glance more, and I had awoke to the reality. . . . They were the print of Pig's feet—the remains of Trotters!!!

6.30.—I have been peering through my telescope. Far away in the distance I catch sight of Herr Grüntz, the Learned Pig, galloping away towards the snow range as fast as his legs will carry him!

*A deserter!* Why is this! “Boot and spur!” I cry. I rush to boot, to ascertain if, after all, I am not deceived, and whether it is not another pig, or a phantasmagoric pig—a pig of the mirage—that I have seen.

No! Alas!! Alas!!! Alas!!!!

For one hour I am overcome. I cannot even write it down in my Diary.

*Wickski!*

7.30.—Recovered. I make this entry: “O miserable day! O Woe! Woe! Woe!”

(It was lucky I said this out loud, as the Horse had begun to trot off after the Pig; only, when he heard “Woe! Woe!” he pulled up, and stopped. It’s an ill-wind that blows nobody any good.)

Let me record the fact.

On the ground before the boot I found the letters of the Alphabet thus arranged:—

*“Mouse would sing. Pig could not sleep. You called Pig a bore. Mouse hath murdered sleep. Pig hath murdered Mouse.*

---

*Henceforth Pig is a wanderer on the face of the earth."*

At once I examined the hole where the Mouse used to repose.

Only the remains of a small bit of toasted cheese.

I see how it was done. Detectives of no use here. Pig evidently put cheese out for Mouse. Mouse went out to supper, and Pig, like a second Lucrezia Borgia—or, rather *Boar-gia*—murdered the unhappy vocalist at the meal. As there are no traces of the deed, it is clear that Pig ate Mouse.

Alas! alas! This breaks up the establishment. "Oh, all my pretty chicks in one fell soup!" How intent Shakespeare must have been on chicken broth when he wrote this—if my quotation is correct.

And yet—— Justice must be done. The Pig must be pursued and punished,—yes, even though he flee to Africa, for protection among the sons of Ham.

8 A.M.—Packing up, and off. Gaoler's Daughter still asleep. Why disturb her? Why should her fate be linked with mine? I will leave a slip of paper, saying, "*If I am not back by four, don't expect me.*" I shall not be back at four, and she will *not* expect me. At least she can never say that I disappointed her. Farewell, O Gaoler's Daughter! I am off with the old Love,—or, more correctly speaking, I am off, without the old Love. For she is old, there's no denying it.

Away to Khiva!

11 A.M.—Several miles on the road. Horse galloping. Through telescope I see Pig reaching summit of distant range. Pig's ears visible—back—curly tail—hind trotters in air as he disappears over the mountains—

Oh, if a thaw would only set in! Oh that these ice-mountains would but melt! I should re-name the locality the *Melton* country. It is like travelling over a perpetual rink.

*Next Day.*—Forced to abandon sleigh, trap, and Tartar Boy. Told him to wait till called for. He asked for payment, alleging that he was the sole surviving representative, the heir and assignee of the Sleigh-driver. Kicked him. Tartar Boy threatened to follow me on skates, or to go back to Gladitzova and inform Russian Police that I was a spy.

Gave Tartar Boy three roubles and a half (sorry to part with one of them, as it was my tossing rouble, with which I had been invariably fortunate—but this is mere superstition), and promised to send the rest home to his Mother. Farewell, ungrateful Boy! Ta Ta! Tartar Boy! I am now alone! with the sleigh behind me containing only the empty boot and the broken barrel-organ, and I am bravely sticking to my word, for I am riding postilion to Khiva.

*The Day After.*—Still riding, thank Heavens! A thaw!!! The mountains are disappearing!

The tops of the spires of the *kromeskys* in Khiva are just visible to the spectacted eye.

*Midday.*—Clear view all round.

4.30 P.M.—Thaw continuing. Attic-windows of Greek Church in Khiva visible. On! on! my gallant Mare!

5 P.M.—I am suddenly aware of being followed at a distance by a crowd of people. Through telescope I recognise their faces. They are all persons to whom I have, during my progress, given free admissions for the first night of my Exhibition (with Pig & Co.) at Khiva. What a House it will be! But how can I apologise for the non-appearance of Herr Grüntz? Perhaps I may yet come up with him. Thawing fast. No more mountains; they are thawed away! Gee up!

*Last Days of my Diary.*—Shall I ever reach Khiva? Only a few pounds of cocoa left in my saddle-bags. No *wickski*! All gone! Cold set in again. No money left. Only a cheque on the Kashgar Bank.

*Monday.*—Came on a small village suddenly. It is called *Bokagain*. The Bokagainians told me I'd better not proceed. Dangerous. Ask them for an advance on my Kashgar cheque. The Bokagainians informed me they never advanced. They gave me some rice, as many black beans as will make five white ones, and an Inland Haddock (dried), as a symbol of amity. Rode on to Khiva. Made some cocoa. Lost sight of pursuers.

*Same Night.*—Gave Horse some beans and some whacks. On again.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Next Morning.*—Horrible—too horrible! Saw wolves before me. Rattled my hat, played barrel-organ, and hooted. They went away slowly . . . . *as if after a heavy meal* . . . . A carcase lies in the road . . . . *Cold Pig!* . . . . Alas, poor Pig! . . . Shed tears—the first I've shed for some time . . . . Poor Pig! What will thy family say? "This Pig went to Khiva, his Pig stayed at home," &c. He may have

deserved his fate, but there were two sides of bacon to his character. How playful and unobjectionable was thy cheek! how brilliant thy crackling! how open thy countenance! How thou didst lick thine own pork-chops! Alas, poor Pig! I strew thy resting place with beans! . . . . Fortunately the wolves have left the greater portion of his skin. On the spot I cover my saddle with it. *In-memori-ham* . . . . Once more in the Pig-skin! But what will the Free Admissionists say?

*Next Night.*—Khiva at last. At a distance they perceive me. Flags up. Fireworks. Rejoicing. Bands of music. Rush to meet me. Affecting scene. I have achieved my object. I have ridden to Khiva!

\* \* \* \* \*

Arrived. I dismount, and ask for a bath.

They cannot give me a bath, but bring me an old Khan.

\* \* \* \* \*



Jollifications. Will they change my cheque on the Kashgar Bank? Yes, with pleasure, on receiving instructions to that effect from England. Till they do, will I stop here as a guest, and enjoy myself? Certainly. Good.

I am at Khiva. The Free Admissionists are outside the gates parleying with the Governor, who is inside looking over the wall. My "orders" only admit them to my Show, but *not into Khiva*. Row.

The information which I shall be able to give the English Government *will be most valuable*.

*Joyful News!*—I re-open my Diary. This morning I heard a peculiar yet familiar noise outside my door. Half awake, I jumped out of bed.

"Who's there?" I cried in three languages.

No verbal answer, but in the space between the door and the floor appeared some of the

letters of the well-known Alphabet, spelling, "*Me ! Poor Pig ! Pardon !*"

I opened the door, and in he trotted. Alive! all alive!! . . . . He is pardoned. It was the remains of a wild boar that I had mistaken for those of Herr Grüntz.

*To-Night.*—At Khiva. First performance of Learned Pig. Great success.

Shall return to England at once. As I learn there is a Performing Dog (a mere amateur) going about in the best society imitating my Pig's tricks.

My Pig will tell any one his or her age on the Cards if the inquirer only mentions the date of his birth. He need not do this aloud, but merely whisper in my ear, or write it down.

My Pig will double any number that any Gentleman or Lady in the company may think of; he will halve it; he will add ten to it; he will subtract twenty: and be right in the re-

sult. He will back himself against *Psycho* or *Zoe* at the Egyptian Hall, and play *écarté* and the Russian *Ykooch Dnilb* with any one, including either Mr. Maskelyne or Mr. Cook, for twenty pounds aside.

My Pig will be shot from an eighty-four pounder, dance on a slack wire, and take a hundred feet header into a litter.

No connection with any other Show now exhibiting. Pigstickers beware! Early application to my agent in London absolutely necessary.

From information received I may mention that it is highly probable that I shall be able to add an

### ADDITIONAL ATTRACTION,

In a Terpsichorean performance by the  
FAIR CIRCASSIAN,

Who has written to say she will join me in London at an enormous expense. She will be accompanied by the

**EVANSKI CHORISTERS,**

Who will sing most of their native Tartar  
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***THE RIDE TO KHIVA!!***

*Postscriptum.*—I am now riding back. I promised to out-do Captain F. Burnaby, by riding *to and from* Khiva. My friends who have confidence are already singing, "He

will return, I know him well." And believe me, "I am coming, Sister Mary."

Returning *viâ* Monaco.

Not many people here. Good business. Met rich old gentleman. Left poor old gentleman. Rode on.

*Paris*.—Once more in the capital of pleasure. *Moi et le Cochon !* Rode into Paris by the *Arc de Triomphe* on horseback. *L'homme Cheval* they call me here. The bill is headed with the picture of a *centaur*.

*Boulogne*.—One night only. All quiet.

*Calais*.—Crossed on horseback by the Packet-boat.

*Dover*.—Arrived. Never dismounted once. Riding at anchor.

On my way to "Home, Sweet Home."

END OF DIARY.

*Editor's Appendix.*—We have done our Riding Representative an unintentional injustice. Private Wire, who was an old soldier in every sense of the word, has absconded, and left a confession with the Confidential Boy in our office, who has returned to his duties thoroughly penitent. Private Wire has appropriated the subscriptions raised for our Riding Representative's tour, and therefore Our Representative has been, equally with ourselves, the victim of a cruel conspiracy. Our Esteemed Contributor's Friend, the Livery Stable Keeper, has called on us, and we have referred him for a settlement to our Riding Representative, who, on his return, will no doubt set everything right.

\* \* \* \* \*

He *has* returned. All amicably settled. We retract everything, and are sorry we spoke. He *is* a man of his word. Everything *is* right. No further difficulties. There can be no doubt that our excellent friend *has* ridden to Khiva and back again. In future we shall have every confidence in him, and send him away as soon as possible. He says Khiva is a very charming place, and, from his description, not totally unlike Margate.—ED.



*"Whose end is, to hold the mirror up to nature; to show the very age and body of the time, his form and pressure."*

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